

Abstract

Over the past years, Korean film has been very popular and rapidly taken airtime in many Asian countries. Film tourism is a growing area of research and has captured attention of several destination marketing organizations (DMOs) as effective marketing strategies to promote destinations through film. At present, there are substantial film tourism studies for western film and still limited film studies on Asian film. Past research suggested that film could enhance destination preference and increase intention to visit destination. Those who are exposed to the film will be more familiar with destinations and will be likely to include destinations featured through film in their choice sets. To date, this notion has hardly been tested on the differences between viewers and non-viewers. Furthermore, studies on the effects of film on the destination choice are very limited.

Although there is a growing body knowledge of film tourism, studies focusing on the effects of viewing Asian film and destination choice are still lacking. Furthermore, past studies mostly focused on the interested destinations or filmed locations as case studies. The results are debatable in terms of methodological concerns. This study introduced an alternative research design to test the effects of film on destination choice by employing a cross sectional survey design including a group of non-viewers of Korean film and two groups of viewers who have low and high frequency of viewing Korean film. Data was collected at Suvarnabhumi International Airport. The respondents included 610 Thai tourists who were leaving Thailand to any countries including Korea. The aim of this study was to examine whether the frequency of viewing Korean film increased the preference for Korea, intention to visit Korea and likelihood of Korea being included in the destination choice sets.

The results showed that the higher the frequency of viewing Korean film would increase preference for Korea, intention to visit Korea, likelihood of Korea being included in the awareness set and likelihood of Korea being included in the evoked set. The study provides both theoretical and methodological contributions to tourism research as well as encourages practical implications for DMOs. Lesson learned from Korean film can provide knowledge for Thailand and other countries to use film to promote destinations.

Keywords: film tourism, destination choice, Korean film, tourist behaviour